



DEPARTMENT OF THE ARMY
NORTHWESTERN DIVISION, CORPS OF ENGINEERS
12565 WEST CENTER ROAD
OMAHA, NEBRASKA 68144-3869

January 22, 2003

REPLY TO
ATTENTION OF:

Office of the Division Engineer

Mr. Steven A. Williams
Director
U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
U.S. Department of the Interior
Room 3256
Washington, DC 20240-0001

Dear Mr. Williams:

In accordance with our agencies' letters dated December 20, 2002 and December 26, 2002, I am transmitting our Supplemental Biological Assessment (BA) on the flow-to-target System release plan presented in the 2003 Annual Operating Plan (AOP) for the Missouri River Mainstem Reservoir System (System). This Supplemental BA is for use in our formal consultation on the flow-to-target System release plan under Section 7 of the Endangered Species Act.

I believe a consultation process and focus that emphasizes mutual goals and fosters effective partnership between our agencies will ultimately result in the successful completion of our formal consultation and biological opinion process within the 135-day time period established by regulation. To facilitate your evaluation of the adequacy of this BA, I would like to make clear to you my objectives for this consultation. They are as follows:

Overall Objectives

- USFWS Biological Opinion (BiOp) that focuses on the accomplishment of agreed upon, achievable, and measurable performance objectives.
- Preservation of the currently authorized System project purposes of flood control, navigation, irrigation, power, water supply, water quality control, recreation, and fish and wildlife, and the flows necessary to effectively continue to serve these purposes (e.g., having no split season).
- Full USFWS and Corps collaborative review and discussion of additional biological, engineering, and hydrological information that has become available since the November 2000 BiOp.

- Population and fledge ratio goals for interior least terns and piping plovers as previously established in the November 2000 BiOp.
- A clear incidental take statement (ITS) for terns and plovers that is understood by both the Corps and the USFWS. This ITS would include:
 - Release flexibility (use of flow-to-target option instead of flat release option) during droughts.
 - Clearly stated real-time implementation criteria.
 - Clear guidelines on the circumstances and limitations for the use of the Corps' captive rearing facility at Gavins Point Dam.

My staff and I look forward to working with you and your staff in the coming weeks. The point of contact for this consultation is Ms. Jody Farhat (402-697-2686).

If I can be of further assistance, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Sincerely,



David A. Fastabend
Brigadier General, U.S. Army
Division Engineer

Enclosure